

# ESSAY

*ON THE QUESTION*

WHETHER ISLAM HAS BEEN BENEFICIAL  
OR INJURIOUS TO THE HUMAN  
SOCIETY IN GENERAL,

AND TO THE  
MOSAIC AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.

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## ISLAMIC BELIEF IN GOD.

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The fundamental doctrine of Islam is that from the very creation of world down to its final destruction there has been, and for ever will be, 1 one true orthodox belief; the foundation of this religion is the recognition the truth that there is one only and true God. "There is no God but God" "He is God, besides whom there is no God; who knoweth that which future and that which is present: He is the most Merciful. He is G besides whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Giver of Peace, Faithful, the Guardian, the Powerful, the Strong, the most High. He God, the Creator, the Maker, the Originator. He hath most excellent nam Whatever is in heaven and earth praiseth Him: and He is the Mighty, 1 Wise." This belief is over and over again inculcated in the Koran and pass upon passage might be quoted to verify this statement, but a few will suffi "Verily your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in days; and then ascended His throne; He causeth the night to cover the da it succeedeth the same swiftly; He also created the sun and the moon, at the stars, which are absolutely subject unto His command. Is not t whole creation, and the empire thereof, His? Blessed be God, the Lord all creatures! Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret; for He love not those who transgress, and act not corruptly in the earth; and call up Him with fear and desire: for the mercy of God is near unto the righteo It is He who sendeth the winds spread abroad before His mercy, until th bring a cloud heavy with rain, which He drives unto a dead country; an He causes water to descend thereon, by which is caused all sorts of spru forth."—Koran Sura 7. ("Al. Araf.") The description of the attributes the Deity is very fine, as the following extracts from the second and oth Suras of the Koran will show:—

"God!—there is no God but He; the living the self-subsisting, tl eternal! neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him; to Him belongeth wha soever is in the heavens or on the earth. Who is there that can interce with Him, but through His good pleasure? He knoweth that which is come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledg but so far as He pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and cart and the preservation of both is no burden unto Him. He is the High,—tl Mighty."

"Blessed be He, in whose hands is the Kingdom, and over all things He potent. Who hath created Death and Life, to prove which of you most righteous in his deeds,—He is the Mighty—the Forgiving—who hat created the seven heavens one above another; no defect canst thou discove in the creation of the God of Mercy! repeat thy gaze,—Seest thou a singl flaw! The twice more repeat thy gaze, and it shall return unto thee, dull and weary."

This belief in an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent and all-wise De carries logically with it the fact that God's religion and rule of life ut have at all ages been the same. To this religion is given the nam Islam—a word signifying resignation, or entire submission to the service commands of God.

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# ESSAY

ON THE QUESTION

## WHETHER ISLAM HAS BEEN BENEFICIAL OR INJURIOUS TO HUMAN SOCIETY IN GENERAL.

AND TO THE

### MOSAIC AND CHRISTIAN DISPENSATIONS.

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THE subject upon which we are now about to treat, is one which, from its very nature, requires, in order to command attention and awaken interest, to be approached in a spirit equally free from illiberality, prejudice, and acrimony ; and as the tone of our observations will therefore be conciliatory, we trust that, at least, if we fail to convince, we shall not offend. Our subject matter will be divided into four sections.

#### SECTION I.—*On the Advantages derived by Human Society in general of Islam.*

Conscientiously disposed as we ourselves may be to treat the subject impartially, it is with the more regret we say that Christian writers invariably regard everything relative to Islam with so much suspicion, as to afford us very little hope that our present remarks will not be viewed through the same offensive medium. On this account, therefore, we shall content ourselves here with mentioning those advantages and benefits for which Christians themselves acknowledge human society is indebted to Islam. The following remark, coming as it does from Sir Wm. Muir, is the more valuable, as being the deposition of by no means a willing witness: "And what have been the effects," asks that author, "of the system which, established by such instrumentality, Mohammad has left behind him? We may freely concede that it banished, for ever, many of the darker elements of superstition which had, for ages, shrouded the Peninsula. Idolatry vanished before the battle-cry of Islam: the doctrine of the unity and infinite perfections of God, and of a special, all pervading Providence, became a living principle in the hearts and lives of the followers of Mohammad, even as it had in his own. An absolute surrender and submission to the divine will (the very name of Islam), was demanded as the first requirement of the religion. *Nor are social virtues wanting.* Brotherly love is inculcated within the circle of the

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\* Islam entirely rooted out idolatry from Arabia, and brought home to all other creeds that were at that time prevalent in the world, the notion that idolatry was a grave sin.

faith.\* Orphans are to be protected, and slaves treated with consideration.† Intoxicating drinks are prohibited, and Mohammadanism may boast of a degree of temperance unknown in any other creed.‡

When dwelling upon the subject of Mohammad's "merit towards his country," the celebrated historian Gibbon remarks as follows: "His beneficial or pernicious influence on the public happiness is the last consideration in the character of Mohammad. The most bitter or most bigoted of Christian or Jewish foes will surely allow that he assumed a false commission to inculcate a salutary doctrine, less perfect only than their own. He piously supposed, as the basis of his religion, the truth and sanctity of *their* prior revelations, the virtues and miracles of their founders. The idols of Arabia were broken before the throne of God; the blood of human victims was expiated by prayer, and fasting, and alms, the laudable or innocent arts of devotion; and his rewards and punishments of a future life were painted by the images most congenial to an ignorant and carnal generation. Mohammad was, perhaps, incapable of dictating a moral and political system for the use of his countrymen; but he breathed among the faithful a spirit of charity and friendship; recommended the practice of social virtues; and checked by his laws and precepts the thirst of revenge, and the oppression of widows and orphans. The hostile tribes were united in faith and obedience, and the valour which had been idly spent in domestic quarrels was vigorously directed against a foreign enemy."

Mr. Davenport, in his admirable "Apology for Mohammad and the Koran," observes as follows: "It is a monstrous error to suppose, as some have done and other still do, that the faith taught by the Koran was propagated by the sword alone, for it will be readily admitted, by all unprejudiced minds, that Mohammad's religion—by which prayers and alms were substituted for the blood of human victims, and which instead of hostility and perpetual feuds, breathed a spirit of benevolence and of the social virtues, and must, therefore, have had an important influence upon civilization—was a real blessing to the Eastern world, and consequently, could not have needed exclusively the sanguinary means so unsparingly and so unscrupulously used by Moses for the extirpation of idolatry.

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\* Not only "within the circle of the faith;" but to all beings whose hearts to use the phrase of the Hadees. "are fresh with life."

† Virtually speaking, Islam almost abolished slavery, for in no case is it allowed, except in that of war captives and that also with the benevolent intention of saving their lives. Persons who give them their liberty are entitled to the highest degree of reward; those who ransom their lives stand next in the order of meritoriousness; and those who keep them as slaves must maintain them in the same style of living as they do themselves.

‡ To these excellent injunctions Sir William might have added, the prohibition of all games of chance; the abstaining from the use of indecent words and expressions; love and reverence for parents; compulsory alms; and kind treatment of animals, etc.



“How idle and ridiculous was it, therefore, to bestow nothing but insolent opprobrium and ignorant declamation upon one of the most powerful instruments which the hand of Providence has raised up to influence the opinions and doctrines of mankind through a long succession of ages. The whole subject, whether viewed with relation to the extraordinary rise and progress, either of the founder personally, or of system itself, cannot be otherwise than one of the deepest interest, nor can there be any doubt but that, of those who have investigated and considered the comparative merits of Mohammadanism and Christianity, there are few who have not at times felt confounded at the survey, and been compelled not only to admit that even the former must have been ordained for many wise and beneficent purposes, but even to confide in its instrumentality in the production, at least, of much eventual good.” The same author goes on to remark that “the first revivers of philosophy and the sciences, the link, as they have been termed, between ancient and modern literature, were, most undoubtedly, according to every species of testimony, the Saracens of Asia and the Moors of Spain, under the Abassido and Omniade Caliphs. Letters which originally came to Europe from the East were brought thither, a second time, by the genius of Mohammadanism. It is well known that arts and sciences flourished among the Arabians for almost six hundred years; whilst among us rude barbarism reigned, and literature became almost extinct.” . . . “And again, ‘It must be owned, that all the knowledge, whether of physic, astronomy, philosophy, or mathematics, which flourished in Europe from the tenth century, was originally derived from the Arabian schools; and that the Spanish Saracens, in a more particular manner, may be looked upon as the fathers of European philosophy.’” “But to resume,” says the same author, “Europe is still further indebted to Mohammadanism; for, not to mention that to the struggles during the Crusades we mainly owe the abolition of the onerous parts of the feudal system, and the destruction of those aristocratic despotism on the ruins of which arose the proudest bulwark of our liberties, Europe is to be reminded that she is indebted to the followers of Mohammad, as the link which connects ancient and modern literature, for the preservation, during a long reign of Western darkness, of the works of many of the Greek philosophers, and for the cultivation of some of the most important branches of science, mathematics, medicine, etc., which are highly indebted to their labours.”

The writer of an excellent article upon Mohammadanism in Chambers's Cyclopædia, observes as follows :

“That part of Islam, however, which has undergone the least changes . . . in the course of time, and which most distinctly reveals the mind of its author, is also its most complete and its most shining part—we mean the ethics of the Koran. Injustice, falsehood, pride, revengefulness, calumny, mockery, avarice, prodigality, debauchery, mistrust and suspicion are inveighed against as ungodly and wicked; while benevolence, liberality, modesty, forbearance, patience and endurance,

frugality, sincerity, straight-forwardness, decency, love of peace and truth, and, above all, trusting in God and submitting to His will, are considered as the pillars of true piety and the principal signs of a true believer."

The same writer goes on to remark as follows :—

"We cannot consider in this place what Islam has done for the cause of all humanity, or, more exactly, what was its precise share in the development of science and art in Europe. Broadly speaking, the Mohammadans may be said to have been the enlightened teachers of barbarous Europe, from the ninth to the thirteenth century. It is from the glorious days of Abbaside rulers that the real renaissance of Greek spirit and Greek culture is to be dated. Classical literature would have been irredeemably lost had it not been for the home it found in the schools of the 'unbelievers' of the 'dark ages.' Arabic philosophy, medicine, natural history, geography, history, grammar, rhetoric, and the 'golden art of poetry,' schooled by the old Hellenic masters, brought forth an abundant harvest of works, many of which will live and teach as long as there will be generations to be taught."

The writer of an Essay, entitled "Islam as a Political System," inserted in the "East and the West," enumerates in the following passage the advantages that human society derived from Islam :—  
"Islam put an end to infanticide, then prevalent in the surrounding countries. Christianity might have equally opposed, but was not equally successful. It put an end to slavery, the adscription to the soil. It gave equality of political rights, and administered even-handed justice, not only to those who professed its religion, but to those who were conquered by its arms. It reduced taxation, the sole tribute to the State, consisting of the tenth. It freed commerce from all charges and impediments ; it freed the professors of other faiths from all forced contributions to their church or their clergy, and from all religious contributions whatever to the dominant creed. It communicated all the privileges of the conquering class to those of the conquered who conformed to its religion, and all the protection of citizenship to those who did not. It secured property, abolished usury, and the private revenge of blood. It inculcated cleanliness and sobriety ; it did not inculcate them only, but it produced and established them. It put an end to licentiousness, and associated with charity to the poor the forms of respect for all."

"The results produced by Islam," continues the same writer, "seem too vast, too profound too permanent, to allow us to believe that the human mind could anticipate them, far less adjust the scheme ; thence the disposition to take refuge in chance, or providential instead of applying to it the process of reasoning by which we estimate the effects of the laws of Solon or the triumphs of Timoleon. Nevertheless, this scheme was framed by a single man, who filled with his own spirit those were in immediate contact with him, and impressed a whole people with the profoundest veneration of which men ever was the object. The system of laws and morals which he formed agreed equally with the highest development as with the lowest level of society.

which, during ten centuries, passing from race to race, made every people by whom it was received superior to, and triumphant over, the nations and empires with which they came in contact."

Thomas Carlyle, in his "Lectures on Heroes," remarks on the subject under consideration, as follows: To the Arab nation it (Islam) was as a birth from darkness into light; Arabia first became alive by means of it. A poor shepherd people, roaming unnoticed in its deserts since the creation of the word: a Hero-Prophet was sent down to them with a word they could believe: see, the unnoticed becomes world-notable, the small has grown world-great; within one century afterwards Arabia is at Granada on his hand and at Delhi on that;—glancing in valour and splendour and the light of genius, Arabia shines through long ages over a great section of the world. Belief is great, life-giving. The history of a nation becomes fruitful, soul-elevating, great, so soon as it believes. These Arabs, the man Mohámmad, and that one century,—is it not as if a spark had fallen, one spark, on a world of what seemed black unnoticed sand; but lo! the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high, from Delhi to Granada!"

## SECTION II.—*Refutation of the Opinion that Islam has been Injurious to Human Society.*

Sir Wm. Muir states that, "setting aside considerations of minor import, three radical evils flow from the faith. . . . First; Polygamy, Divorce, and Slavery are maintained and perpetuated;—striking as they do, at the root of public morals, poisoning public life and disorganizing society. Second: Freedom of judgment in religion is crushed and annihilated. Toleration is unknown. Third: A barrier has been interposed against the reception of Christianity." We shall consider every one of these evils singly and separately.

It is a great mistake to suppose that by Islam polygamy is made compulsory upon its followers, on the contrary, the general practice of it is not even recommended, the privileged use of it being reserved for such as for physical reasons may stand in need of it, but in the absence of such an excuse the indulgence in it is wholly contrary to the virtues and morality taught by Islam.

Unfortunately, however, no small impediment is thrown in the way of a calm and candid investigation of the subject by the antagonism which exists between the manners, customs, and modes of thought of one nation and those of another. Thus, the very word polygamy suggests to Christians ideas so offensive that they enter upon any discussion respecting the practice with minds almost predetermined to find in it nothing but an unmitigated evil, and without inquiring how far it may be justified by the requirement of climate, the comparative number of the sexes, and by various physiological and social reasons.

We propose to consider this subject from three points of view, namely, Nature, Society, and Religion.

For the due consideration of the first point, it will be necessary to ascertain, if possible, what has been the will or intention of the Creator of all living creatures as regards this subject, or, in other words, whether He intended man to be universally polygamistic or not. Now this His intention, can, we apprehend, be read clearly and indisputably in all the works of nature, for it is evidently impossible that His will should be at variance with the productions of it; and, accordingly, from the unerring manifestations of nature we learn that such beings as are intended by their Creator to be monogamistic invariably bring forth their young, in pairs, one of the two being a male and the other a female. Those, on the other hand, that are intended to be polygamistic are delivered of one or more, no relative proportion of sex being observed. According to this law of nature man falls under the second head; but as, by his position, and by the rare and precious endowment of reason, he is raised far above all other sentient beings, so is he required to use all those powers, rights, and privileges bestowed upon him by nature in common with the other beings around him, with caution, and in harmony with his physical, social, and political liabilities, as well as with the laws of hygiene and the influences of the climate in which he lives.

Secondly: Man is, by his very nature, a social being; and therefore, as God saw "it was not good for man to be alone," he made "a help for him," which is woman—one who was destined to share with him the cares and the amenities, the sorrows and pleasures, of life; to increase his happiness and diminish his affliction by her tender sympathy—one, lastly, who was to contribute, with himself, to carry out that great, that all-important command, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth." When, however, from whatever cause, this helpmate fails to perform her natural duty, some remedy must surely have been appointed by the All-wise Creator to meet the exigency, and that remedy is polygamy—that is, the act of a man's marrying either more than one wife at one and the same time, or after divorcing the former one. The latter privilege is allowed to the wife in the event of the husband's incompetency, with this reasonable difference only, that man can have recourse to his remedy when he so wills, while the wife must first obtain a legal authorization for the act.

If this remedy, whose necessity we have proved both by natural and social laws—the tendency of both which descriptions of laws is pretty nearly the same—had been denied to man, society would have greatly suffered thereby, since man would have been led, in consequence to commit vices and crimes of the deepest dye.

Again, in order to prevent persons from running into excess—which is at all times bad, and sometimes dangerous—and to render it certain that the person so having recourse to polygamy was impelled by a real necessity, many stringent restrictions and binding regulations have been established, such as the observance of



perfect equality of rights and privileges, love and affection, among all wives, etc., etc. These restrictions and regulations materially serve to prevent truly pious and religious persons from indulging in polygamy, for they almost immediately discover that the availing themselves of this privilege, without fulfilling its conditions and observing its regulations, which are so strict as to be extremely difficult to be complied with, is incompatible with the due and faithful discharge of their religious duties. No doubt the institution of polygamy affords many facilities to the libertine, as well as to all whose sole object in life is the unrestrained gratification of their animal appetites; but for this abuse of a beneficial institution they will be amenable to the Great Searcher of the human heart, who will most assuredly, mete out to them the punishment due to their offence.

We cannot allow to pass unnoticed the remarks of Mr. Higgins, and, after him, those of Mr. Davenport, in favour of polygamy. It is to be regretted that both these gentlemen should have viewed polygamy from one point of view only—namely, a physiological one—whereas our religion has granted this liberty, not only from physiological considerations, but, as we have above stated, to afford a remedy for the embitterments of conjugal life. Mr. Davenport says:—“With respect to the physiological reasons for polygamy it has been observed by the celebrated Montesquieu that women, in hot countries, are marriageable at eight, nine, or ten years of age;—thus, in those countries, infancy and marriage almost always go together. They are old at twenty. . . . It is, therefore, extremely natural that in these places a man, when no law opposes it, should leave one wife to take another, and that polygamy should be introduced.”

Mr. Higgins writes that “Biologists and natural philosophers have found other reasons which might serve as some apology for this allowance (polygamy), which will not apply to us cold-blooded, frog-like animals of Northern climates, though they may be applicable to the descendants of Ishmael, natives of the scorching sands of the desert.” Again, he says, “I find it asserted in the Oriental collections of Sir W. Ouseley, page 108, that ‘the warm regions of Asia make a difference between the sexes not known to the climates of Europe, where the decay of each is mutual and gradual; whereas in Asia it is given to man alone to arrive at a green old age.’ If this be true, it goes far to excuse Mohammad in allowing a plurality of wives, and it sufficiently accounts for the fact that Jesus never expressly declared himself upon this subject, but left it to the regulation of the governments of countries, as it was evident that what would be proper for Asia would be improper for Europe.” Nor should we be justified in leaving out from our impartial consideration the deplorable morals that were in general practice shortly previous to the advent of Mohammad. Persia stood foremost in the corruptness of her morals. The laws of marriage were set aside. Respect and regard to relationship, however close or distant, were not at all observed. A mother was as lawful to her son as a daughter to her father, or a sister to her brother; in fact, they may justly be compared to a flock of animals, which are

guided by no law whatever. When we turn our attention to a little north-west of Persia, a locality mostly inhabited by Jews, we find that polygamy was a general practice, without any restrictions, Arabia, again, affords us a perfect combination of the customs of the Persians and the Jews, where there was no end to the number of wives, and where no law guided the people in their choice. All women, without any distinction of rank, age, or relation, served alike to the brutal appetites of the male sex. When we look upon the Christianity of that age—if it can be called Christianity at all—we see many of her professors pursuing a course diametrically opposite to the above-mentioned one; we mean the somewhat general practice of celibacy. In short, it was amidst this mental and intellectual darkness, and the corruptions and depravity of the manners and morals which enveloped the world on all sides, that Mohammad's genius codified a law, so perfect in its nature, so consistent with reason and propriety, so conducive to the health and prosperity of society, and so beneficial to the matrimonial existence of both the parties interested.

Thirdly : When the subject is considered from a religious point of view, we find that polygamy is nowhere prohibited in Judaism and Christianity, which at present are, besides Islam, the only two inspired religions in the world. For the support of our assertion we shall quote the remarks of a few eminent *Christian* authors in favour of polygamy. Higgins states that “because Mohammad, following the example of the legislator of the oldest ceremonial religion west of the Euphrates, and, as all Christians maintain, of the world—Moses—allowed his people, the descendants of Ishmael, the son of the father of the faithful, a plurality of wives, he has been constantly abused by Christians, to use their own words, for *pandering to the base passions of his followers*. But why the allowance of a plurality of wives should be visited with such very harsh censure, I do not know. Surely the example of Solomon, and David—the man after God's own heart, which *He had found to fulfil His law*—might plead for a little mercy, more especially as Jesus nowhere expressly forbids, in any one of the twenty Gospels which were written by some or other of the multitude of the sects of his followers, to record his commands.” Davenport states :—“As to the lawfulness of polygamy, it will be seen, by referring to the following passages in Scripture, that it was not only approved, but even blessed, by Jehovah himself—Gen. xxx. 22; Exodus xxi. 11; Deut. xvii. 17: 1 Sam. iv. 1, 2, 11, 20; 1 Sam. xxv. 42, 43; 2 Sam xii. 8; 2 Sam v. 12; Judges x. viii. 30; Judges 4; Judges xii. 9, 14.”

But the most distinguished and talented defender of polygamy was the celebrated John Milton, who, after quoting numberless passages from the Bible in defence of the practice, says :—“Moreover God, in an allegorical fiction (Ezekiel), represents himself as having espoused two wives, Aholah and Aholiah—a mode of speaking which Jehovah would by no means have employed, especially at such length, even in a parable, nor, indeed, have taken upon himself such a character at all, if the practice which it implied had been, intrinsically dishonorable or shameful. On what ground, then, can a practice consider

so dishonourable or shameful which is prohibited to no one, even under the Gospel ; for that dispensation annuls none of the merely civil regulations which existed previously to its introduction." . . . "Lastly," continues Milton, "I argue as follows, from Hebrews xiii. 4 : Polygamy is either marriage, fornication, or adultery. The Apostle recognizes no fourth state. Reverence for so many patriarchs who were polygamists will, I trust, deter every one from considering it as fornication or adultery ; for 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; whereas the patriarchs were the objects of His special favour, as He himself witnesses. If, then, polygamy be marriage, properly so called, it is also lawful and honourable. According to the same Apostle, 'Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.'"

The subject of Polygamy has been considered from three different points of view—Nature, Society, and Religion ; but as it is not necessary to consider *Divorce* with regard to the first of the above subjects, it will be discussed only in connection with the other two.

Considering the universality of the institution of marriage among all nations, both ancient and modern, and its general recognition as the basis of man's individual and social happiness, whatever tends to lessen its influence must ever be regarded as a serious evil.

Hence the Church of Rome has thrown around marriage the halo of sanctity by making it one of her Seven Sacraments, as the best means of its defence ; while Protestant England, with the like view, made a decree for divorce—only attainable by a very expensive appeal to the House of Lords—an arrangement which lasted till the year 1856, when a new Court of Justice was created to take cognizance of all cases of divorce, and determine their merits by the verdict of a Jury.

Generally speaking, divorce is the greatest of enemies to society, by diminishing the respect due to marriage, and destroying man's confidence in woman's fidelity. It cannot, however, be denied that divorce has also its advantages : it releases either the husband or the wife, whose incompatibility of disposition, violence of temper, or frailty, embittered the life of both. But, while being thus a benefit to the individual, divorce is not the less injurious to society by the scenes of immorality too often blazoned before the public, and also by the injurious effect which the separation of their parents must have upon the children of the parties. Such being the evils which follow in the train of divorce, the having recourse to it as a remedy can only be justified when its non-adoption would cause miseries still more unbearable, cares and anxieties still more annoying, and daily increasing animosities and mutual recriminations.

Our Prophet neither underrated nor overvalued divorce. He constantly pointed out to his followers how opposed it was to the best interests of society ; he always expatiated upon the evils which flowed from it, and ever exhorted his disciples to treat women with respect and kindness, and to bear patiently their violence and ill-temper ; and he always spoke of those who availed themselves of divorce

in a severe and disparaging manner ; so that many a person was led into the mistake that they who had recourse to divorce, and they who shed human blood, were guilty of crimes of equal atrocity. Notwithstanding, however, Mohammad's rooted antipathy to divorce, he gave it the importance and consideration it justly claimed and merited. He allowed it under circumstances when it could not fail to prove a valuable boon ; when it either entirely removed, or at least greatly alleviated, the cares, troubles, and embitterments of wedded life ; and when, if not taken advantage of, society would suffer still more than it already did. In such cases divorce is far from being a disadvantage to society ; it is, on the contrary, a blessing and an efficient means of bettering the social condition. Mohammad did not restrict himself to merely allowing divorce to be adopted under certain circumstances ; he permitted to divorced parties three several distinct and separate periods within which they might endeavour to become reconciled and renew their conjugal intercourse ; but should all their attempts to become reconciled prove unsuccessful, then third period, in which the final separation was declared to have arrived, supervened.

Mahmood, son of Waleed, narrates a tradition that the Prophet was apprised of a certain individual who had given to his wife these three separate notices of divorce at one and the same time, and that then the Prophet, becoming exceedingly wrath, addressed the party thus : " Darest thou thus trifle with the commands of God, and that even in my presence ? " Observing that the Prophet was greatly excited and angry, a person, approaching him, asked " Shall I go and slay the offender ? " for by the wrath of the Prophet he was erroneously led to suppose that the crime committed was grave enough to merit that severe punishment."

In like manner the Prophet had said that " a woman who demands divorce without strong and unavoidable necessity, will ever remain a stranger to the fragrance of Paradise.

The reader will find all these traditions expressly mentioned in *Mishkat*, in the chapter appropriated to " Divorce."

Now, it will be evident to every reflecting reader that the indulgence of divorce allowed by Islam, under such circumstances as those above specified, is not in the least repugnant to the laws of society, but, on the contrary, is greatly conducive to its health, prosperity, and welfare.

Contemplating the subject from a religious point of view, we find that in Judaism, divorce is allowed in all cases and under all circumstances, and that even Christians admit its propriety and lawfulness in one instance ; but John Milton has almost exhausted the subject by his able and learned treatment of it ; and we cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following passage from his work, entitled "*A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*":—

" Marriage, by its definition, is a union of the most intimate



nature, but not indissoluble or indivisible, as some contend, on the ground of its being subjoined, Matt. xix. 5, *they two shall be one flesh*. These words, properly considered, do not imply that marriage is absolutely indissoluble, but only that it ought not to be lightly dissolved. For it is upon the institution itself and the due observance of all its parts, that what follows respecting the indissolubility of marriage depends, whether the words be considered in the light of a command, or of a natural consequence. Hence it is said, *for this cause shall a man leave father and mother . . . and they two shall be one flesh* : that is to say, if, according to the nature of the institution, as laid down in the preceding verses, Gen. ii. 18-20, the wife be an help-meet for the husband ; or, in other words, if good-will love, help, comfort, fidelity remain unshaken on both sides, which, according to universal acknowledgment, is the essential form of marriage. But if the essential form be dissolved, it follows that the marriage itself is virtually dissolved.

“ Great stress, however, is laid upon an expression in the next verse—*what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*. What it is that God hath joined together the institution of marriage itself declares. God has only joined what admits of union what is suitable, what is good, what is honourable ; he has not made provision for unnatural and monstrous associations, pregnant only with dishonour, with misery, with hatred, and with calamity. It is not God who forms such unions, but violence, or rashness, or error, or the influence of some evil genius. Why, then, should it be unlawful to deliver ourselves from so pressing an intestine evil ? Further, our doctrine does not separate those whom God has joined together in the spirit of his sacred institution, but only those whom God has himself separated by the authority of his equally sacred law ; an authority which ought to have the same force with us now as with His people of old. As to Christian perfection, the promotion of which is urged by some as an argument for the indissolubility of marriage, that perfection is not to be forced upon us by compulsion and penal laws, but must be produced, if at all, by exhortation and Christian admonition. Then only can man be properly said to dissolve a marriage lawfully contracted, when, adding to the Divine ordinance what the ordinance itself does not contain, he separates under pretence of religion whomsoever it suits his purpose. For it ought to be remembered that God, in His just and pure and holy law, has not only permitted divorce on a variety of grounds, but has even ratified it in some cases, and enjoined it in others, under severest penalties.—Ex. xxi. 4, 10, 11 ; Deut. xxi. 14, xxiv. 1 ; Ezra x. 3 ; Nehem. xiii. 23, 30.

“ The third passage is Deut. xxiv. 1 : *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house*. There is no room here for the charge of hardness of heart, supposing the cause alleged to be a true and not fictitious one. For since, as is evident from the institution itself, God gave a wife to man at the begin-

ning to the intent that she should be his help and solace and delight, if as often happens, she should eventually prove to be rather a source of sorrow, of disgrace, of ruin, of torment, of calamity, why should we think that we are displeasing God by divorcing such a one? I should attribute hardness of heart rather to him who retained her, than to him who sent her away under such circumstances; and not I alone, but Solomon himself, or, rather, the spirit of God itself speaking by the mouth of Solomon.—Prov. xxx. 21, 23: *For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear; for an odious woman when she is married.* On the contrary, Eccles. ix. 9: *Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity which He hath given thee* the wife therefore *which He hath given thee* is she *whom thou lovest*, not she whom thou hatest; and thus, Mal. ii. 16, *whoever hateth, or, because he hateth, let him dismiss her*, as all, before Junius, explain the passage. God therefore appears to by that of the Prophet, with the view, not of giving scope to the hard-heartedness of the husband, but of rescuing the unhappy wife from its influence wherever the case required it. For there is no hard-heartedness in dismissing honourably and freely her whose own fault it is that she is not loved. That one who is not beloved, who is, on the contrary, deservedly neglected and an object of dislike and hatred; that a wife thus situated should be retained, in pursuance of a most vexatious law under a yoke of the heaviest slavery (for such is marriage without love) to one who entertains for her neither attachment nor friendship, would indeed be a hardship more cruel than any divorce whatever. God therefore gave laws of divorce, in their proper use most equitable and humane; He even extended the benefit of them to those whom He knew would abuse them through the hardness of their hearts, thinking it better to bear with the obduracy of the wicked than to refrain from alleviating the misery of the righteous, or suffer the institution itself to be subverted, which, from a Divine blessing, was in danger of becoming the bitterest of all calamities.

“Christ himself, v. 9, permitted divorce for the cause of fornication, which could not have been, if those whom God had once joined in the bands of matrimony were never afterwards to be disunited. According to the idiom of the Eastern languages, however, the word fornication signifies, not adultery only, but either what is called *any unclean thing*, or a defect in some particular which might justly be required in a wife, Deut. xxiv. 1 (as Selden was the first to prove by numerous Rabbinical testimonies in his *Uxor Hebræa*); or it signifies whatever is found to be irreconcilably that variance with love, or fidelity, or help, or society, that is, with the objects of the original institution,—as Selden proves, and as I have myself shown, in another treatise, from several texts of Scripture. For it would have been absurd, when the Pharisees asked whether it was allowable to put away a wife for every cause, to answer that it was not lawful, except in case of adultery, when it was well known already to be not only lawful but necessary to put away an adulteress, and that, not by divorce, but by death. Fornication, therefore must be here understood in a much wider

sense than that of simple adultery, as is clear from many passages of Scripture, and particularly from Judges xix. 2 :—*his concubine played the whore against him* ; not by committing adultery, for in that case she would not have dared to flee to her father's house, but by refractory behaviour towards her husband. Nor could Paul have allowed divorce in consequence of the departure of an unbeliever, unless this also were a species of fornication. It does not affect the question that case alluded to is that of a heathen since whoever deserts her family *is worse than an infidel* 1 Tim. v. 8 Nor could anything be more natural or more agreeable to the original institution than that the bond which had been formed by love, and the hope of mutual assistance through life, and honourable motives, should be dissolved by hatred and implacable enmity and disgraceful conduct on either side. For man, therefore, in his state of innocence in Paradise, previously to the entrance of sin into the world, God ordained that marriage should be indissoluble ; after the fall, in compliance with the alteration of circumstances, and to prevent the innocent from being exposed to perpetual injury from the wicked, he permitted its dissolution, and this permission forms part of the law of nature and of Moses, and is not disallowed by Christ. Thus every covenant, when originally concluded, is intended to be perpetual and indissoluble, however soon it may be broken by the bad faith of one of the parties, nor has any good reason yet been given why marriage should differ in this respect from all other contracts, especially since the apostle has pronounced that *a brother or a sister is not under bondage*, not merely in a case of desertion, but *in such cases*, that is, in all cases that produce an unworthy bondage, 1 Cor. vii. 15 : *a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases ; but God hath called us in peace, or to peace* ; He has not therefore called us to the end that we should be harassed with constant discord and vexations, for the object of our call as peace and liberty,—not marriage, much less perpetual discord and the slavish bondage of an unhappy union, which the Apostle declares to be, above all things, unworthy of a free man and a Christian. It is not to be supposed that Christ would expunge from the Mosaic law any enactment which could afford scope for the exercise of mercy towards the wretched and afflicted, or that his declaration on the present occasion was intended to have the force of a judicial decree, ordaining new and severer regulations on the subject ; but that, having exposed the abuses of the law, he proceeded after his usual manner to lay down a more perfect rule of conduct, disclaiming on this, as on all other occasions, the office of a judge, and inculcating truth by simple admonition, not by compulsory decrees. It is therefore a most flagrant error to convert a Gospel precept into a civil statute, and enforce it by legal penalties."

One of the gravest charges which has been brought against Islam, and which is represented to be hostile to the laws of society, is the lawfulness of slavery. We say "hostile to the laws of society," since on viewing the subject through a religious medium, neither Jews nor Christians can be bold enough to find fault with or object to it, since

almost every page of the Old Testament teems with passages which admit the legality of slavery, and since there is nowhere to be found in the New one a single passage that forbids the same inhuman practice. Before making any remarks of our own upon this subject, we shall quote the following remarks of Godfrey Higgins :—

“It seems unfortunate for the cause of humanity that neither Jesus nor Mohammad should have thought it right to abolish slavery. It may be said that when they directed their proselytes to do to others as they would be done unto, they virtually abolished it. This is plausible but unfortunately it is not in practice true. The domestic slavery of the Mohammadans is no doubt indefensible, but what is this compared to the cruelty and horrors of the African slave trade, and the plantations of the West Indies? We hear enough in all conscience of Popes of Rome and Archbishops of Canterbury, of Councils and Convocations, of Bulls, Articles, Canons, and Concordates ; but when did we ever hear of any public act of these men against this horrible traffic? Show me the Bull, show me the Canon or Act of Convocation. The Bishops of Rome and Canterbury themselves deserve the epithet of *panders to the base passions of their followers*, which they give to Mohammad, for not having, when the atrocity of this traffic was clearly proved, excommunicated all those engaged in carrying it on, as was done by the Quakers.

“I am aware that they may make a plausible defence, by alleging that they cannot excommunicate a man for the fact of being the owner of slaves because the legality of slavery is admitted in almost every page of the Gospels and Epistles ; as wherever the word *servus*, is found and translated servant, the word used ought to be *slave*—the word *servus* literally meaning a person bought or sold in a market, the freedman answering to our hired servant. But if domestic slavery be unfortunately allowed to Christians, it by no means follows that the African slave trade is allowed, the horrors of which could never have been suspected by the ancients, and which in every respect differs from their domestic slavery.

“Although the Prophet did not, as he ought to have done, abolish that horrid custom, he did not leave it altogether unnoticed, but, in declaring that all Mohammadans are brothers, and that no man should hold his brother in slavery, he at once liberated a vast mass of mankind. The moment a slave declares himself a believer he is free. Although Mohammad did not in this go so far as he ought to have done yet he did something, and that was better than nothing ; and while it has probably induced some to avow themselves proselytes without conviction (on which account it will be reprobated and attributed to a bad motive by the pious Christian, whose zeal is warmed by a live coal from off the altar), yet it has saved from misery millions upon millions. Another modification of slavery, or alleviation of its evils, is to be found in the ordinance, that in the sale of slaves the mother shall on no account be separated from the children—a crime committed by our West Indians every day, I have not observed any



ordinance of this kind in the Gospels ; therefore Mohammad did not copy it from them.

“ We make many professions of a wish to convert the poor Negroes ; I advise our Missionary Societies to use their enormous wealth in giving the Negroes their freedom as soon as converted, declaring them brothers, after the example of the Mohammadans. I can assure them that this will make more proselytes than all their sermons.

“ The *Westminster Review* says :—‘ His law of slavery is, “ If slaves come to you, you shall”—*not* imprison and then sell by public sale, though no claimant appears, as in the nineteenth century is the law of Christian England in her provinces, but—“ redeem them ;—and it is forbidden to you to send them forth.” And this was a man standing up in the wilds of Arabia in the seventh century.

“ Mohammad says :—‘ Unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument, allowing them to redeem themselves on paying a certain sum, write one ; and if ye know good in them, give them of the riches of God which He hath given you.’ I have not found this in the Gospels.”

With all due thanks to that learned author for his talented and warm defence of Islam, we would observe that, to his remark, “ Another modification of slavery, or alleviation of its evils, is to be found in the ordinance, that in the sale of slaves the mother shall on no account be separated from the children,” may be added several other ordinance which were equally well suited for the “ modification of slavery” and “ the alleviation of its evils.” The following ordinance greatly contribute to the abolition of slavery :—“ All persons in your possession are your brothers, both of you being of one human race ; therefore treat them with kindness, feed them and clothe them in the same manner as you do yourselves.” The above ordinance produced so much effect upon the minds of the people, that all persons in former times clothed their slaves with the same cloth which they themselves wore, allowed them to sit along with themselves at the same table and partake of the same food as they did, and when on the slave used to ride on the same camel, and walk by turns.

In his splendid Caliphate, Omar, consider him as you may—either as a successor of the Prophet, or as the monarch of the greatest empire of the world—used to lead, by the nose-string, in the burning sands and scorching wind with mingled emotions of delight and self-approval, the camel mounted by his slave, whose turn it was to ride. Fatimah, the Prophet’s daughter, used to sit with her female slaves, and grind wheat together, so that the labour and trouble might fall equally on both. If this be the slavery which Sir Wm. Muir represents as “ disorganizing society,” we cannot conceive what equality of rights would be. Such a slavery, indeed—if slavery it can be called at all—would highly organize society and improve public morals. The Prophet went further, and ordered that no one should address his male

or female slaves by that degrading appellation, but by the more decent as well as affectionate name of "My young men," or "My young maid." According to his order, no act upon earth is more meritorious, more deserving of God's favour and blessing, than the granting of liberty to slaves ; and Mohammad concentrated his chief pleasure in this. All the above will be found in Bokharee, in the chapter devoted to the freedom of slaves. To the remark of Mr. Higgins that "it is unfortunate for the cause of humanity; that neither Jesus nor Mohammad should have thought it right to abolish slavery," we wish to add that Mohammad *did* almost entirely abolish slavery.

The rules by which one man became the slave of others, in ancient times, and which were in force among the Pagans, and also upheld by the sacred lawgiver, Moses, were practised in Arabia so late even as in the lifetime of the Prophet ; but he in a very short time entirely rejected all those rules ; so that all that can be found in Islam relative to slavery is the following verse of the Koran :—"When ye encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads, until ye have made a great slaughter, and bind them in bonds, and either give them a free dismission afterwards, or exact a ransom, until the war shall have laid down its arms" (chap. lvii. 5).<sup>\*</sup> It will be evident from the above passage that the order for making captives of the unbelievers, when overpowered, was with the intention of saving their lives. Two rules are laid down for the treatment of such captives after the war : one is that of giving them a free dismission ; the other that of exacting a ransom. No third mode of treating them is mentioned. But when the captive cannot give ransom, and when the owner is unwilling to grant him his liberty, in that case alone he can become a slave, remaining so only until he pays ransom, or till the owner emancipates him. It must, therefore, be now evident to our readers that the Prophet did almost entirely abolish slavery.

Our lawyers are divided in their opinions as to the circumstances under which free dismission is to be granted to war-captives. Some maintain that they are to be liberated only when they consent to reside within the Moslem territories, as subjects of the Mussulman authorities. Others, however and with much plausibility, hold that war-captives should be granted a free dismission, without being subjected to any conditions whatsoever, and that after being freed they are at liberty to reside within the dominions of the Mohammadans as subjects, or to return to their own country. It will be evident from the above-quoted passage of the Koran that that Holy Book lays down no condition whatever for a free emancipation, and that therefore the opinion of the latter authors is the more authoritative of the two.

We are not a little sorry to witness the wretched character of the domestic slavery practised (as in some Christian countries also) in

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\* This rule cannot hold good in the present time, as almost all wars are now waged on account of political misunderstandings, whilst those referred to by this rule must be undertaken for reasons which we shall presently explain.

Mohammadan States ; but we assure our readers that those who either practise it themselves or allow others so to do are evidently acting in opposition to the principle of their religion, and must one day stand as guilty sinners before the awful tribunal of the Infallible Judge.

Sir Wm. Muir remarks that in Islam "freedom of judgment in religion is crushed and annihilated."

Now, the precise import of this *dictum* of Sir William is very difficult to comprehend ; for we are quite at a loss to find what it is in Islam that crushes and annihilates "freedom of judgment" in religious matters, and what there is in other religions that allows it.

The Jews, whose books form the basis both of Christianity and Mohammadanism, implicitly believe that every word of the Old Testament, including the historical parts, notwithstanding the authors are unknown, is a Revelation from on high, and therefore infallible, and that every person must, without the least hesitation or objection, and without making any use of his reasoning powers, put faith therein.

As for the Christians, they are divided into two classes as regards belief—those who believe in the *plenary* inspiration of the Scriptures, and those who believe them to be only *partially* inspired—the latter denying inspiration to the purely historical parts, and confining it to matters of doctrine, etc., etc.

But independently of this modified belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, Christians are required to give their assent to two other main and indispensable articles of faith, which still more effectually crush and annihilate "freedom of judgment in religious matters ;" and therefore in this respect Christians are worse off than God's chosen people.

The first of these articles of belief is that of "The Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity," and a very peculiar one it is ; for the very word *Trinity* was not introduced to express the three sacred persons of the Godhead until the second century after Christ, when Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, invented it ; nor was the doctrine of the Trinity settled until the Council of Nice, or Nicea, held three hundred and twenty-five years after Christ, and at which the doctrines of Arius were condemned. Nor is this all, for, by the labours of Porson, and other eminent Greek scholars, it has been proved that the text—which is the sole authority for the doctrine—is an interpolation ; therefore if the merit of belief is to be estimated in proportion to its difficulty, great indeed must be that of Christians. Now, every person, before he can bear the name and enjoy the religious privileges of a Christian, must implicitly believe in this doctrine. All Christians declare that notwithstanding this dogma is wholly opposed to nature and reason, it must be believed in, blindly and doggedly, all exercise of reason and judgment being interdicted.

The second principle is the doctrine of *the sacrifice of Christ for the past, present, and future sins of mankind*—a doctrine alike antagonistic to nature and to reason, and which crushes and annihilates “freedom of judgment in religion.” This doctrine, by doing away with man’s responsibility for his actions, opens the floodgates of vice and immorality, since the greater and more numerous sins a person commits, the greater is the goodness of the Redeemer;—and hence, the greater the sinner, the greater the saint! It must not be, however, supposed that, in consequence of this doctrine, Hell will be unpeopled, because all unbelievers—and “their name is legion”—will occupy its gloomy regions. Another article of the Christian faith, equally mischievous to society, is that of predestination; for should the believer in it be of a confident, hopeful disposition, he easily persuades himself that God has, from all eternity, inscribed his name in the Book of Life, and therefore, were his crimes and sins as numerous as the sands on the sea-shore, they would not blot his name out of the page of salvation. If he be of a saturnine, gloomy character, he feels confident that his name does not appear on the page of life, and therefore he has no inducement to curb the evil propensities of his natural disposition.

With respect to Islam, it can be safely and confidently asserted that its nature is diametrically opposed to the remark of Sir Wm. Muir, and that perhaps, there is no religion upon earth superior to it in respect of the liberty of judgment which it grants in matters of religious faith.

We shall here quote the following remark of a celebrated French author—M. de St. Hilaire—demonstrating, as it does, that in support of our own observations we can adduce as witnesses not only our co-religionists, but also liberal and judicious professors of other religions—nay, even of Christianity itself.

“There is nothing mysterious,” writes the above-named author—“nothing supernatural, in Mohammadanism. It is itself averse to being concealed under any mask, nor is it to blame if a few obscurities are still to be found in it, for from its very origin it has been as candid and ingenuous as was possible.” All the Mohammadan traditions are, according to Islam, open to the free judgment of every person, as well as for free inquiry and investigation, as regards the narrators and also the subject-matter, and he is at liberty to reject entirely all such traditions which, according to his free and unbiassed judgment, and after patient investigation, prove themselves to be contrary to reason and nature, or which, by any other way, are found to be spurious.

But we do not find any such liberty granted us as regards either the Old or the New Testament. Not even the grandest, and indeed the main, principle of Islam—the existence of God and his Unity—is required by that religion to be blindly and slavishly accepted by its professors. The Koran itself teaches and inculcates this sublime doctrine, not by a compulsory iron hand, but by arguments and by appealing to Nature. It first establishes the existence and unity of



God by the existence of all objects in Nature, and then requires us to embrace that eternal truth. "Look over the world," says that Holy Book—"is it not wonderful, the work of Allah?—wholly a sign to you, if your eyes were open! This earth—God made it for you. . . . appointed paths in it. You can live in it—go to and fro on it. Great clouds born in the deep bosom of the Upper Immensity—where do they come from? They hang there. The great black monsters pour down their rain-deluges to revive a dead earth, the grass springs, and tall leafy palm-tress, with their date-clusters hanging round. Is not that a sign? Your cattle, too—Allah made them;—serviceable dumb creatures: they change the grass) into milk; you have your clothing from them. Very strange creatures: they come ranking home at evening time . . . and are a credit to you! Ships, also—huge moving mountains: they spread out their cloth wings—go bounding through the water there, Heaven's wind driving them;—anon they lie motionless—God has withdrawn the wind—they lie dead and cannot stir! Miracles? . . . What miracle would you have? Are not you yourselves there? God made you—shaped you out of a little clay! Ye were small once; a few years ago ye were not at all. Ye have beauty, strength, thoughts; ye have compassion on one another. Old age comes on you, and grey hairs: your strength fades into feebleness; ye sink down, and again are not. Ye have compassion on one another . . . Allah might have made you having no compassion on one another—how had it been then?"—The Koran is full of passages, like the above, inculcating the worship of the Unity of God, both by argument and reference to Nature.

The remark that "the sword is the inevitable penalty for the denial of Islam," is one of the gravest charges falsely imputed to this faith by the professors of other religions, and arises from the utter ignorance of those who make the accusation. Islam inculcates and demands a hearty and sincere belief in all that it teaches; and that genuine faith which proceeds from a person's heart cannot be obtained by force or violence. Judicious readers will not fail to observe that the above-quoted remark is entirely contrary to the fundamental principles of the Moslem faith, wherein it is inculcated, in the clearest language possible—"Let there be no FORCING IN RELIGION, the right way has been made clearly distinguishable from the wrong one" (chap. x. 98). And also, *If the Lord had pleased, all who are on the earth would have believed together; AND WILL THOU FORCE MEN TO BE BELIEVERS? No man can believe but by the permission of God, and He will pour out His indignation on those who will not understand.*" (chap. ii. 257).

The principle upon which Moses was allowed to use the sword—to extirpate all idolators and infidels, without exception of one single individual—is by no means applicable, to Islam. Mohammadanism grasped the sword, not to destroy all infidels and Pagans, not to force men to become Moslems at the sword's point, but only to proclaim that eternal truth—the unity of the Godhead throughout the whole extent of the then known globe.

According to Islam, the best and the most meritorious act is the preaching and making generally known the existence of one invisible God. It could hardly be expected that, in the infidel countries there could be sufficient personal security for such Moslems who might choose to inculcate by precept, exhort by preaching, and practice openly the worship of the unity of God, and therefore appeal was at once made to the sword in order to establish the superiority of the Moslem power, and to insure security and tranquility for such Moham-madans as might choose to preach the wholesome doctrine of their faith, and to live in peace in those countries, so that their habits, conduct, and manner of living might serve as example for the unbelievers. The effect so desirable, viz., that the Moslems might live in peace and preach the worship of the one only true God was only attainable by one of three ways. First: The voluntary conversion of the people. Secondly: The establishment of peace and security by means of alliances, offensive and defensive, and, Thirdly: By conquest. As soon as the desired object was secured the sword was immediately sheathed. If tranquillity was established by either of the two last methods, the parties had no authority to interfere with the religious observances of the subject or of each other; and every person was at liberty to observe, unmolested by any one, all the ceremonies and rites, whatever they might be, of his creed.

The preceding observations likewise show clearly the gross mistake into which some writers have fallen, when they assert that in Islam "toleration is unknown." But in saying this, we do not mean to deny that some of the later Mohammadan conquerors were guilty of cruelty and intolerance, but that the doctrines of our religion ought not to be judged from their actions. We must, however, inquire, in order to discover whether they acted according to it or not, and we shall then arrive at an undeniable conclusion that their actions were in opposition to the doctrines of their religion. But, at the same time, we find that those conquerors who were anxious to act according to the doctrines of their religion did practice tolerance, and granted amnesty, security, and protection to all their subjects, irrespective of caste or creed. History furnishes us with innumerable instances of the tolerance of Moslem conquerors, and we shall here quote a few remarks made by various Christian writers which prove the tolerant spirit of Islam. A Christian writer who, of all others, is the least expected to show any partiality towards Islam, in an article upon the general history of Spain, thus expresses himself upon the subject.

"One remarkable feature," says he, "of their (the Omniades of Spain) rule deserves mention, as it contrasts them so favourably with the contemporary and subsequent rule of Spain, even to the present time (19th century), and that is their *universal toleration in religious matters*," (Chambers's Cyclopædia).

Godfrey Higgin writes on the subject as follows: "Nothing is so common as to hear the Christian priests abuse the religion of

Mohammad for its bigotry and intolerance. Wonderful assurance and hypocrisy ! Who was it expelled the Moriscoes from Spain, because they would not turn Christian ? Who was it murdered the millions of Mexico and Peru, and gave them all away as slaves because they were not Christians ? What a contrast have the Mohammadans exhibited in Greece ! For many centuries the Christians have been permitted to live in the peaceable possession of their properties, their religion, their priests, bishops, patriarchs, and churches ; and at the present moment the war between the Greeks and Turks is no more waged on account of religion than was the late war between the negroes in Demerara and the English. The Greeks and the Negroes want to throw off the yoke of their conquerors, and they are both justified in so doing. Wherever the Caliphs conquered, if the inhabitants turned Mohammadans, they were instantly on a footing of perfect equality with the conquerors. An ingenious and learned Dissenter, speaking of the Saracens, says, ‘ they persecuted nobody ; Jews and Christians all lived happy among them.

“ But though we are told the Morescoes were banished, because they would not turn Christians, I suspect there was another cause. I suspect they, by their arguments, so gained upon the Christians, that the ignorant monks thought that the only way their arguments could be answered was by the Inquisition and the sword ; and I have no doubt they were right as far as *their* wretched powers of answering them extended. In the countries conquered by the Caliphs, the peaceable inhabitants, whether Greeks, Persians, Sabceans, or Hindoos, were not put to the sword as the Christians have represented ; but after the conquest was terminated, were left in the peaceable possession of their properties and religion, paying a tax for the enjoyment of this latter privilege, so trifling as to be an oppression to none. In all the history of the Caliphs, there cannot be shown anything half so infamous as the Inquisition, nor a single instance of an individual burnt for his religious opinion : nor, do I believe, put to death in a time of peace for simply not embracing the religion of Islam. No doubt the later Mohammadan conquerors in their expeditions have been guilty of great cruelties these Christians authors have sedulously laid to the charge of their religion ; but this is not just. Assuredly, religious bigotry increased the evils of war, but in this the Mohammadan conquerors were not worse than the Christians.”

The same author remarks that “ the exertions of the missionaries of the Christians, though evidently allowed the greatest latitude, do not appear to have had any great success. I have some doubt as to what would happen, even in this *enlightened* age, as it calls itself, if the Grand Seignior were to send (as our missionaries did a Mr. Drummond to Geneva, to teach their peculiar doctrines) one of the richest of his Mufties to build a mosque and to preach the doctrines of the Koran in the centre of London. I suspect, a well grounded fear that this would cause renewal, under the auspices of the priests, of the fires of the year eighty, or of those of more recent date at Birming-



ham, would cause our ministers to answer him by the mouth of one of our admirals, who might entertain an opinion that it was possible to bombard Constantinople."

John Davenport, in his "Apology," writes in the following strain:—"It was at the Council of Nicea that Constantine invested the priesthood with that power whence flowed the most disastrous consequences, as the following summary will show: the massacres and devastations of nine mad crusades of Christians against unoffending Turks, during nearly two hundred years, in which many millions of human beings perished; the massacres of the Anabaptists; the massacres of the Lutherans and Papists, from the Rhine to the extremities of the North; the massacres ordered by Henry VIII. and his daughter Mary; the massacres of St. Bartholomew in France; and forty years more of other massacres, between the time of Francis I. and entry of Henry IV. into Paris; the massacres of the Inquisition, which are more execrable still, as being judicially committed; to say nothing of the innumerable schisms, and twenty years of popes against popes, bishops against bishops; the poisonings, assassinations: the cruel rapines and insolent pretensions of more than a dozen popes, who far exceeded a Nero or a Caligula in every species of crime, vice, and wickedness; and, lastly, to conclude this frightful list, the massacre of twelve millions of the inhabitants of the New World, *executed crucifix in hand!* It surely must be confessed that so hideous and almost uninterrupted a chain of religious wars, for fourteen centuries, never subsisted but among Christians, and that none of the numerous nations, stigmatized as heathen, even spilled a drop of blood on the scores of theological arguments."

The celebrated Mr. Gibbon, the greatest of the modern historians, and whose authority cannot be doubted or questioned, writes as follows: "The wars of the Mohammadans were sanctified by the Prophet, but, among the various precepts and examples of his life, the Caliphs selected the lessons of *toleration* that might tend to disarm the resistance of the unbelieving. Arabia was the temple and patrimony of the God of Mohammad; but he beheld with less jealousy and affection the other nations of the earth. The polytheists and idolators who were ignorant of his name might be lawfully extirpated, but a wise policy supplied the obligations of justice, and, after some acts of intolerant zeal, the Mohammadan conquerors of Hindostan have spared the pagodas of that devout and populous country. *The disciples of Abraham, of Moses, and of Jesus were solemnly invited to accept the more perfect revelation of Mohammad; but if they preferred the payment of a moderate tribute were entitled to the freedom of conscience and religious worship.*"

The author of article, entitled "Islam as a Political System," inserted in *The East and the West*, thus expresses himself on the subject under consideration:—"Mohammad was the only founder of a religion who was at the same time a temporal prince and a warrior. Their power lay exclusively in restraining violence and ambition; his temptation was ambition, and the sword was at his disposal. It is



therefore to be expected that, making religion a means to temporal power, and having obtained that sway over the minds of his followers by which they accepted as law and right whatever he chose to promulgate, his code should be found at variance with all others, and even in opposition to those dictates of justice which are implanted in the breasts of all men. If, then, we find that it is not so—if we find him establishing maxims of right international dealings, of clemency in the use of victory, moderation in that of power above all, *of toleration in religion*, we must acknowledge that, amongst men who have run a distinguished course, he possesses peculiar claims to the admiration of his fellow-creatures." Again, he says:—"Islam has never interfered with the dogmas of any faith, never persecuted, never established an Inquisition, never aimed at proselytism. It offered its religion, but never enforced it; and the acceptance of that religion conferred equal *rights* with the conquering body, and emancipated the vanquished States from the conditions which every conqueror, since the world existed, up to the period of Mohammad, has invariably imposed. For its proselytes there was no obligation of denial and revilement of their former creed; the repetition of a single phrase was the only form required or pledge exacted."

"A spirit the very reverse of this (intolerance)," remarks the same author, "is evinced in every page of history of Islam, in every country to which it has extended; so that in Palestine a Christian poet (Lamartine) has exclaimed, twelve centuries after the events to which we are referring, 'The Mohammadans are the only tolerant people on the face of the earth'; and an English traveller (Slade) reproaches them with being too tolerant." What a contrast do these remarks of so many impartial and liberal *Christian* writers afford to the unsupported assertion of Sir Wm. Muir.—"TOLERATION IS UNKNOWN" in Islamism!!

### SECTION III.—*Benefits and Advantages which Judaism and Christianity derived from Islam.*

The reason for mentioning Judaism and Christianity jointly is, because we believe that Jesus Christ did not, for the most part, alter or reject any of the doctrines contained in the Law of Moses; and his own declaration—"Think not I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," (Matt. v. 17)—demonstrates the truth of our assertion, Christianity, therefore, must necessarily, be represented as having been benefited by Islam in those particulars in which Judaism was advantaged. Judaism undoubtedly proceeded from a Divine source, and it inculcated and taught that eternal truth—the existence and Unity of God—only to such an extent as was necessary for securing eternal salvation, and capable of being comprehended by individual living at that period. The perfection of God was promulgated by Islam, and the doctrine of Judaism also received its perfection.

The Divine Unity is said to receive its perfection when three qualifications unite in one—viz. : Unity of the Essence of God—that is, when no other person or object is represented to be a partner there-

of; Unity of the Attributes of God—that is, when those attributes cannot be applied to other object; and Unity of the Reverence and Adoration of God—that is, when that reverence and worship cannot be paid to any other object except God himself. The first two of these qualifications were imperfectly promulgated by Judaism, while the third was left entirely unnoticed. Islam gave complete perfection to the first two, and, by fully indicating and fixing particular methods of paying reverence and offering adoration to God, completed the perfection of the Unity of Godhead; and it is in reference to this fact that God says, in the Koran, “This day have I perfected your religion for you, and have completed my mercy upon you; and I have chosen for you Islam to be your religion.”

In the Pentateuch nothing is mentioned respecting the day of resurrection and the state of the soul after death. The rewards of virtue were—triumph over the enemy, longevity, and freedom from penury; while, on the other hand, the punishment for the sins of mankind was death, plague, famine, and other adversities. Other prophets after Moses, including Christ, preached something respecting the final day, resurrection and true condition of the soul after death; but none of those prophets mentioned them at the length and perfection as was done by Islam, for whom the task was purposely reserved by God. As it was almost impossible to describe and delineate those spiritual conditions—the afflictions of the souls of sinners, and the happiness of those of the virtuous—otherwise than by comparing them to such objects and condition as can be perceived and felt by the senses of man, it was therefore promulgated under the allegory of Paradise and Hell, and the various modes of enjoying the happiness or of suffering the torments, afflictions, etc.

All Jews and Christians, previously to Islam, imputed to many prophets and holy personages acts of the grossest immorality; and although, according to us, these passages had nothing to do with the doctrines of their religion, yet they were, notwithstanding, considered to be such by all Christians and Jews.

Islam vindicated the pure character of those godly personages, and triumphantly refuted the charges brought against them by Jews and Christians. Mohammadan divines examined the whole of the Pentateuch, and exposed all the mistakes of the Christians and Jews. They traced these mistakes either to the wrong interpretation of the passages of the Pentateuch by Jews and Christians, or to errors in early Codices, or to historical blunders; and, had it not been for Islam, the character of those prophets and holy individuals—of Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Judah, of the wives and sons of Jacob, of Aaron David, and Solomon, for example—would have been as disparaging in the eyes of the present generation as that of culprits condemned to transportation for life or to expiate their crime upon the scaffold.

#### SECTION IV.—*Advantages derived from Islam by Christianity particularly.*

No religion upon earth is more friendly to Christianity than

Islam, and the latter has been to none more beneficial and advantageous than to Christianity. The whole interest of Christianity concentrated in that extraordinary character, Jesus Christ, and in the Essenian, John the Baptist; and it was with the most steady resolution, and the most undaunted heart, and the most unflinching perseverance that Islam fought against Judaism in favour of Christianity, and openly and manfully did it declare that the mission of John the Baptist was undoubtedly true, and that Jesus Christ was unquestionably "the Word of God" and "the Spirit of God." What other faith, then, can pretend to have proved itself more beneficial to, and to have done more for, the cause of Christianity than Islam. The worst of corruptions that crept into Christianity after the Apostles, was the doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine which was at once in opposition to eternal truth and contrary to the pure precepts inculcated by Christ. It is to the eternal glory of Islam that it re-established the worship of the Unity of the Godhead, and revived that pure religion inculcated and promulgated by Christ himself; it constantly warned the then-called Christians of their errors, and invited them to accept the true religion—a religion preached by Christ. Many Christians, whose eyes were opened by the loud watchword of Islam, perceived the degraded state into which they had been plunged, and thenceforward strove to recover their former position in the scale of the religions—in general, of the world. This class of men is now distinguished by the proud appellation of Unitarian Christians.

Now, were this Unitarianism taken away from the world for a moment, the following remark of Gibbon would be in every respect apposite:—"If the Christian apostles, St. Peter or St. Paul, could return to the Vatican, they might possibly inquire the name of the Deity who is worshipped with such mysterious rites in that magnificent temple. At Oxford or Geneva they would experience less surprise; but it might still be incumbent on them to peruse the Catechism of the Church, and to study the Orthodox Commentators on their own writings and the words of their Master."

The greatest of all boons conferred by Islam upon Christianity is the spirit of resistance which it breathed into the Christians against the exorbitant power of the Popes, under which they had so long groaned. The Pope was looked upon as the infallible vicar of Christ. He could open the gates of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. He arrogated to himself the power of purging away, by means of *Indulgences*, the sins of whomsoever he pleased. He was invested with full power to make what was unlawful, lawful. In fact, in the authority he possessed, and the jurisdiction he exercised, he was in no way inferior to Christ himself. The Koran, in the following passage, pointed out the evils flowing therefrom, reprimanded the Christians for their slavish servility, and exhorted them to throw off so ignominious a yoke, and to seek out the truth for themselves.

The Koran says:—"Say, O ye who have received the Scriptures—come to a just determination between us and you—that



we worship not any besides God, and associate no creature with Him, and that the one of us take not the others for Lords (the High Priests and the Popes) besides God " (chap. iii. 57<sup>a</sup>). When this passage was revealed, Adeel Ibni Hatim, a new convert to Islam, said, to Mohammad, " O Prophet of the Lord, we did not use to worship the Pope as our God." Whereupon the Prophet replied, " Had he not the power to pronounce to be lawful that which was unlawful, according to religion, and *vice versa*? And did you not put faith in his words as in the words of God?" He replied, " Verily, O messenger of the Lord—that we used to do." The Prophet rejoined, " This is to take others for Lords (Popes) besides God." For a time this wholesome truth, inculcated by the Koran, was looked upon by Christians with impatience and hatred; but as truth never fails, at the last, to impress itself upon the minds of men, it gradually engrafted itself upon that of Luther, who, when he came in contact with the above-quoted passage of the Koran, at once comprehended the truth it inculcated, and, clearly perceiving the slavish and degrading position in which his co-religionists were plunged, at once stood up to preach publicly against that servile practice; and although some of his adversaries denounced him as being a Mohammadan at heart,† he never desisted from his endeavours, and, at last, succeeded in effecting the grand reform generally known as Protestantism, or the Reformation and for this emancipation of the human mind from the worst of all slavery—a priestly one—Christianity should for ever remain thankful to Islam.

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\* " Besides other charges of idolatry on the Jews and Christians, Mohammad accused them of paying too implicit an obedience to their priests and monks, who took upon them to pronounce what things were lawful, and what unlawful, and to dispense with the laws of God."—*Sule's Koran*, vol. i. p. 63, 2nd Note.

† " Thereupon Genebrard, on the Papal side, charged the German Reformers, chiefly Luther, with endeavouring to introduce Mohammadanism into the Christian world, and to take over the whole clergy to that faith. Maracci is of opinion that Mohammadanism and Lutheranism are not very dissimilar—witness the iconoclastic tendencies of both! More systematically does Martinus Alphonsus Vivaldus marshal up exactly thirteen points to prove that there is not a shadow of difference between the two. *Mohammad points to that which is written down—so do these heretics.* He has altered the time of the fast—they abhor all fasts. He has changed Sunday into Friday—they observe no feast at all. *He rejects the worship of the Saints—so do these Lutherans.* Mohammad has no baptism—nor does Calvin consider such requisite. They both allow divorce—and so forth."—*The Quarterly Review*, No. 254.



## COMPANIONS AND FRIENDS.

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Some connections are made for us by God. We are born into the world, members of the families without any choice on our part. There are also connections which we largely make for ourselves. The companions in whose society we take delight, the friends we receive into intimacy are left open to us. Their choice forms an important part of the probation of life.

There is a great difference between an acquaintance and a friend. It is our duty to be courteous to all. There may be pleasant intercourse and an interchange of kindly offices between many persons who are not, in the highest sense of the word friend. "A friend is one to whom we give our hearts, whose society and companionship we seek, in whom we repose our secrets, by whose opinions and advice we are influenced: in short, he is a kind of second self, reciprocally giving and receiving sympathy and aid."

To walk with wise men is to choose them for our associates; and this implies to a similarity of tastes, "can two walk together except they be agreed?"

Solomon says, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." By "wise men" are here meant those who fear God, by "fools" those who love and practice sin. He that walks with true religious men will become religious; but a companion of the wicked will come to a bad end. If the good are our chosen friends, they will encourage us in whatever is right and frown upon every thing that is wrong. This will be a great support to virtue. On the other hand if the wicked are our companions, they will ridicule us when we wish to obey conscience and tempt us to follow their example. If we go among persons having small-pox, we are liable to catch the disease. The risk is far greater of taking the infection of vice from wicked companions. Evil communications corrupt good manners."

No one who is immoral, whatever may be his talents, should be selected as a friend. Vice is like the drop of poison in milk, causing the whole to be thrown away. Neglect of this rule has been the ruin of untold millions.

Frivolous triflers should be shunned. There are some men who are not vicious, who are sprightly and entertaining; but who lack industry and moral earnestness. Idleness is very apt eventually to lead such persons into a downward course. Even if they should not go so far, their life can neither be happy nor useful. The influence of such men can be only injurious.

Our chosen friends should be amiable in disposition and sound in judgment. He who is wanting in prudence, is altogether unfit to advise us in our difficulties. Choose those friends who fear God and who keep His precepts. Friendship founded on such principles will prove an unmingled blessing, and can never be broken. Our friends should be chosen, as far as possible, from persons of the same rank as ourselves. They can best sympathise with us, and aid us by their counsel. Friends should be few and well selected. The human heart is not large enough to find room for many. He who boast of a long list of friends is generally little esteemed. We may have many acquaintances, but we can have only a few friends.

"True happiness,  
Consists not in a multitude of friends,  
But in their worth and choice."

Prayer Book for Muslims -  
Woman & Islam -

Friendship has its duties. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." He who can say, "I care for nobody," will find it also true, "nobody cares for me." If we have no friends, it is not our misfortune, but our fault. It shows that by our selfishness, or other bad qualities, we have not deserved them.

Friends should be treated with courtesy. They should sympathise with one another. They should be confiding, telling each other their joys and sorrows. Happiness will thus be increased and grief will be lightened. While, however, friends should be open in their intercourse, wisdom is necessary. Friendship does not affect other duties. Evil speaking is forbidden. It is wrong to report to a friend any tale of slander which we hear unless there is some good object to be gained. We should not mention to him ill-natured remarks even about himself. We should defend, if possible, an absent friend, but avoid giving him needless pain.

Friends should be ready to assist each other. Kind offices ought never to be omitted, but they are especially called for in seasons of affection. "A friend in need is a friend indeed." We should be the first at the side of a sick friend, and it should be our pleasure to endeavour to alleviate sorrows. The same remark applies to any other trial.

The help rendered to friends must be regulated by justice. I lay it down as a rule without exception, that no degree of friendship can either justify or excuse the commission of a criminal action.

Friends should encourage each other in well-doing. This is the most important office of friendship, and it should be shown more frequently in this way than in reproof. When a person is struggling to resist some temptation on seeking to discharge some difficult duty, it is cheering to have the sympathy of a friend. Strength is often thus imported which enables victory to be secured.

There are few relations more truly noble and holy than the union by which two school boys begin the bottle of life together in a place like this, to one another by a strong, and manly, and thoughtful affection, and then carry it on hereafter perhaps at college, perhaps in some common profession, or if separated, by letters, by joyful meetings and hopeful parting, by the communication of different experiences and plans, anxieties and interest, by praying to God for each other's welfare both of soul and body and seeking in all things each other's improvement.

One of the most important means by which we can benefit our friends is prayer. However separated we may be on earth; it is comforting to think that we are always equally near to a throne of grace. Especially in times of trial should friends intercede for each other.

We are far from being perfect ourselves, and we can expect perfection in our friends. We require to bear one another's burdens, to make allowances for each other. Having once contracted a friendship, retain it, unless there be strong reasons for breaking it off. The chief of these is, when our friend, in spite of our warnings and entreaties, adopt a course of conduct which renders him unworthy of our respect and esteem. In such a case, we should withdraw from him, but more in sorrow than in anger.

Earthly friends may change; one by one they will be removed by death.

But there is one whose love is warmer than a brother's and parent's and every thing else and lasting as eternity. Seek to have God for your friend. He will satisfy the desires of your soul, and bestow upon you every blessing that really be for your good.

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